

LIE: There is full utilization of the animal.

TRUTH: The primary product of the seal hunt is the SKIN of the pup. There is no market for seal meat outside of Newfoundland and government reports admit that there is "very little recoverable meat" on the very young pups targeted for their pristine pelts. There is a limited market for seal oil, made from the pups' blubber, and for the penises. The commercial seal hunt exists to provide skins for the fashion industry in Europe. It is a moot point - even if every part of the pup were used, it is not a justification for the level of cruelty inherent in the commercial seal hunt.



LIE: Protesters disrupt the seal hunt.

TRUTH: Sealing opponents do not attend at the seal hunt to protest or disrupt the hunt. They travel to the seal hunt in order to monitor and document the cruelty involved. They must apply for and pay a fee for an observer's permit and one of the stipulations is that an observer must not come within 10 metres of a sealer when he is killing seals. Any violation of this stipulation will result in the observer permit being revoked and the observer charged with being in breach of the Marine Mammal Regulations.

Unfortunately, there is no distance sealers are required to stay from observers. Consequently, sealers frequently approach and physically assault observers on and off the ice, punching them, striking them with hakapiks, ramming their inflatable crafts in an attempt to capsize them, forcing their vehicles off the road, and even holding them hostage in buildings and helicopters. These assaults have all been documented and captured on video. Department of Fisheries and Oceans and Royal Canadian Mounted Police routinely turn a

blind eye to these assaults and in some cases arrest the assault victims.

The only violence aimed at humans is by sealers toward observers.

LIE: DFO's new "three step process" will ensure animals are killed humanely.

TRUTH: DFO's claim that seals will be killed in a more humane manner is not credible. The three-step process does not conform to international veterinary standards for humane killing, and any changes in killing practices will not be enforceable. It is impossible for DFO to monitor the commercial seal hunt, as there are hundreds of vessels engaged in sealing activity and only a handful of DFO officials. Sealers do not currently adhere to the Marine Mammal Regulations as is evidenced in videotape taken each year of sealers violating the Regulations resulting in extreme cruelty to the pups they kill. It is unlikely that sealers will adhere to the new rules which will force them to slow down, kill less seals and therefore make less money. This is merely lip service - an empty gesture - to placate Europe.



In 2008 observers reported that sealers were not following the three-step process and continued to violate Marine Mammal Regulations which resulted in extreme suffering of pups. They have released videotape to substantiate their claims. The level of cruelty in the 2008 slaughter was identical to the level of cruelty in past years. This is one more example of how this slaughter for fur can never be made humane and must be abolished.

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**ATLANTIC CANADIAN
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CANADA'S COMMERCIAL SEAL HUNT GOVERNMENT PROPAGANDA AND INDUSTRY LIES

LIE: The seal hunt is humane.

TRUTH: Canada's commercial seal hunt is inherently inhumane. The very nature of the seal hunt precludes it from ever being humane. Seal pups as young as 12 days of age are routinely shot or clubbed and left to suffer on the ice, stabbed with large metal hooks and dragged while still conscious, and often skinned alive. Each year observers submit to DFO clear documented evidence of animal cruelty and violations of Marine Mammal Regulations. To date, DFO has not laid any charges.



LIE: The seal hunt is sustainable.

TRUTH: Scientists agree current kill levels are not sustainable. A recent study by Professor Stephen Harris from the School of Biological Sciences at Bristol University asserts that the Canadian management regime for harp seals does not apply a precautionary principle and threatens the survival of seal populations. Over the past ten years, between one-third and one-half of all seal pups born have been slaughtered by commercial sealers. Because seals only reach breeding age at six years of age, the impact of these high hunting levels are only just beginning to be felt. Under its current management plan, by the time the Canadian government decides to take action to save the population, it may well be too late to intervene. Notably, today's kill levels meet and even exceed

those of the 1950s and 60s, when over-hunting reduced the harp seal population by nearly two-thirds.

Due to catastrophic ice conditions in 2007, Canada's Department of Fisheries and Oceans estimated that over 90% of pups born in the southern Gulf of St. Lawrence perished when their nursery ice melted. Despite this, DFO allowed sealers to go in and kill the surviving pups.

LIE: It is illegal to kill baby seals.

TRUTH: While it is true that killing "whitecoats" has been banned since 1983, once a pup begins to molt her white coat – as young as 12 days old – legally, she can be killed.

98% of seals slaughtered are less than three months old and many are still almost completely covered in white



fur. Regardless of their age, they all suffer and feel the same pain, fear and desperate will to live.

LIE: The seal hunt is closely monitored and tightly regulated.

TRUTH: It is physically impossible to monitor the seal hunt. Hundreds of sealing boats span thousands of square miles of ocean while DFO presence is restricted to a few vessels. Each year observers submit to DFO clear documented evidence of animal cruelty and violations of Marine Mammal Regulations. To date, DFO has not laid any charges. DFO expends more time and energy harassing and arresting law-abiding observers than they do monitoring the actions of sealers.

LIE: Seals are eating all the fish.

TRUTH: Over-fishing by humans caused the collapse of groundfish stocks and over-fishing is preventing their return. The Canadian Department of Fisheries and Oceans admits that there is no

evidence that killing seals will help bring fish stocks back.

LIE: The seal hunt is vital for the Atlantic Canadian economy.

TRUTH: Sealing is an off-season activity which accounts for less than one-half of one percent of Newfoundland's

Gross Domestic Product (GDP). Roughly 1% of the population of Newfoundland

derives some income from the seal hunt. Sealing could easily be replaced with alternatives such as license buyback/retraining/early retirement programs and eco-tourism.



LIE: There is an increasing demand for seal products.

TRUTH: Demand is diminishing worldwide. Seal products are currently banned in USA, Belgium, Netherlands, Mexico, Croatia and Slovenia. Italy and Luxembourg have temporary bans in place with plans to implement permanent bans. Panama, Germany, Austria and France have announced intentions to ban seal products. The European Commission is currently contemplating an EU-wide ban on all seal products.

LIE: Canadians support a humane and responsible hunt.

TRUTH: National public opinion polling consistently shows the overwhelming majority of Canadians oppose the commercial seal hunt. A poll conducted by Environics Research in 2005 shows 69% of Canadians are opposed to the seal hunt outright, and even higher percentages oppose inherent aspects of the hunt, such as the killing of seal pups. Attempts by the Canadian government to show the opposite consistently fail.

LIE: The seal hunt is not subsidized by the Canadian government.

TRUTH: Government claims subsidies stopped in 2001. However, government subsidies to the sealing industry have been found as recently as 2004, when nearly \$400,000 was given to two sealing companies to process and develop seal products. Additionally, taxpayer dollars fund the seal hunt, paying for Coast Guard icebreakers to aid sealers in reaching seals, as well as paying the salaries of RCMP, Coast Guard and DFO officials. Additionally, tax dollars are spent on marketing initiatives for seal products and expensive PR campaigns run by the government to promote sealing as an acceptable activity.

LIE: The seal population has exploded, with populations tripling in the last 30 years - a cull is necessary.

TRUTH: What the government neglects to mention is that by the end of the 1970s the seal population was dangerously low due to human over-hunting during the 60s and 70s. When Europe banned whitecoat pelts in 1985, the sealing industry collapsed and seals were given the opportunity to



recover. The seal herd is not "exploding" but rather is still in recovery. Current kill levels now exceed those of the 1960s and 1970s

and seals now also have to contend with climate change. The seals depend on ice to give birth and nurse their pups, and the pups must live on the ice until they are able to swim. The disappearance of nursery ice due to climate change is a serious threat to the survival of the population, and continuous high quotas combined with "struck and lost" seals not accounted for could spell disaster for the seal population.